A LIVABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR WILDLIFE IS QUALITY ENVIRONMENT FOR MAN

Montana Outdoors

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So — You've Applied for a Special License

So, you've put your money down and applied for a special hunting license — moose, antelope, bighorn sheep, or mountain goat. Now all you can do is wait until the mailman brings either the license you want or a "Dear John" refund check. In the meantime, you fidget and you wonder. You wonder if your chances would have been better had you applied earlier. You wonder why it takes so long. You wonder how it could be that you've not had an antelope license in five straight years. You wonder what the odds are that you'll luck out this time.

Up until 1953, the procedure for drawing special licenses was pretty much a matter of picking a name or a number from a hat. Both the methods of drawing and the laws regulating the drawings have since become more complicated, mostly because competition is keener. The actual drawing is now largely accomplished by electronic business machines and is done by a department other than the Fish and Game. Following is a step by step account of the drawing as it is now conducted.

Deadline. Obviously, there must be some time at which no further applications can be accepted. The physical problem of handling and correcting thousands of forms and making them ready for machine selections is time consuming. The deadline for applications must be early enough in the summer so drawings can be completed and licenses gotten in time for plans to be made. On the other hand, it must be late enough in the season so game workers can complete aerial antelope censuses in order to determine the success of spring fawn production. This information is essential when commissioners determine the total number of licenses that will be issued for the season. Applications for 1969 drawings were supposed to bear a post office cancellation date of no later than midnight, July 1.

First rule in order is to keep everything together. Here Janis Winston makes sure that the application form and every thing else that comes in the envelope is securely fastened to the envelope.

The Odds. The odds of your drawing a special hunting license depend more upon which area you apply for than upon the **total** number of applications received by the Fish and Game Department. Take antelope for example. In the first place, Montana law requires that if you didn't have an antelope license last year, you will be given preference in the drawings over hunters who did receive one. Furthermore, even your second or third choices will have priority over first choices of last year's antelope license holders. Nonresidents are further limited for they may not receive more than ten percent of special licenses issued. Beyond this, your chances are determined largely by the popularity of the area for which you are applying. Persons who consistently apply for licenses in popular areas may go for several seasons without success.

During 1968, there were almost 1,300 applications for 550 antelope licenses in the popular district 470 west of Great Falls. On the other end of the scale, there were only 321 applications for 550 licenses in district 731 near Terry. The most popular moose district in 1968 was 101 near Eureka which had over 900 applications for 30 licenses. The least popular moose district was 515 in south-central Montana. There were four applications for five moose licenses authorized there.

Most popular of all bighorn sheep districts is Sun River district 42. This sheep herd consistently provides some of the finest sheep trophies to be found anywhere. Hunters know it, and in 1968, 1,013 applied for the 60 sheep licenses authorized there. Competition for goat licenses was keenest in the Spanish Peaks,

Timesaver—The machine being operated by Isabelle Werle sorts applications for each area into 10 separate stacks. Sportsmen will draw cards at random from each of the 10 stacks.

the Crazy Mountains, and the Teton area. In districts 13 and 25, there were more than enough licenses to fill applications at drawing time.

Preparing for Drawings. When bundles of mail come in to the Fish and Game Department at Helena, the parcels are sorted and bundled for distribution to the proper offices. Special license application forms are pulled from the regular mail and stapled to envelopes in which they were mailed. Enclosed checks, money orders or currency are attached with clips to the applications and they are then routed to the supervisor of a group whose duty is to process the application forms.

Forms are checked to see if they are complete and correct. It is amazing, almost apalling, how carelessly a great percentage of the forms are made. Names and addresses are left off, area choices are not made, fees are not included, addresses are illegible or entirely missing, etc. The incomplete and incorrect forms are returned to applicants so they may have time to make corrections and return the forms.

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Correct forms are stamped with a "control number". This is a number which is used for identification and reference purposes. A portion of the control number also goes into hunting license numbers so that background material on each license holder is immediately available.

At this point, corrected forms leave the Fish and Game Department and their further processing is turned over to the Department of Administration's Data Processing Center. At the Center, a business machine card is prepared for each application. The card is punched with a number of square holes. The numbers and positions of the many holes are meaningful to the machines and cards can be read by computers and sorters more accurately and much more quickly than a scholar can read printed words. A listing of the cards is prepared, proofed, and all cards are filed by hunting districts.

Drawing Procedure. This year's drawings for special licenses will be held Friday, August 8. The actual drawing generally takes a day. Quite a bit of time is involved in checking to see that no more than ten percent of licenses drawn are for nonresidents. Moose licenses are drawn first, then sheep, goats and lastly antelope. By one hunting district at a time, the cards are placed face down in a sorting machine which segregates them into seperate piles. An observer, someone who is in no way connected with either the Fish and Game Department or the Data Processing Center, withdraws cards randomly from the various stacks. This randomly selected stack of cards is then counted by a tabulating machine until the authorized quota is reached. These cards represent persons who will receive special licenses. In the event there are not enough first choices in an area to fill out the license quota, then applications listing the particular area as second choice, or even as third if need be, are drawn from until the quota is filled.

Double checks. Persons who apply for antelope licenses are asked to indicate whether or not they held a license the previous year. Memory can't be depended upon too heavily, however, so electronic machines scan them as a double check. Last year some 500 applicants who stated they did not hold a license the previous year gave the wrong answer. State law also requires that hunters who shot a sheep or moose may not apply for another license in a

Magic card — Sharlene Loendorf shows the card that can communicate with computers and other electronic machines. It still takes the human hand and machine in the foreground to make the original card, however.

quota area for the next succeeding seven years. These too are checked against previous records before licenses are actually issued.

Final steps are printing and mailing licenses to successful applicants and mailing of refund checks to persons who were not successful in drawings. The printing process is also a matter for the machines to handle, and the necessary information is transcribed from punched cards to licenses.

The $35.00 License. Montanans like to hunt, but most won't drive a long way to hunt antelope. Eastern Montanans will remember when antelope in that part of the state were thick enough to be a real headache. The prescription was a number of special nonresident antelope licenses issued at $20.00 each. The out-of-staters were willing to spend the money and to travel the distances, so antelope were cut down to more compatable numbers. Resident hunters still don't travel to eastern areas in numbers large enough to hold antelope in check, so some special nonresident antelope licenses, now $35.00 are still being issued in order to get a proper harvest.

The $35.00 licenses that are issued are leftovers **after** drawings have been completed for residents and nonresidents applying on a $151.00 license. Quotas of $35.00 licenses as shown on official hunting regulations are estimates, based on past experience, of how many ante-

lope licenses may be uncalled for after drawings have been completed. These licenses will go to resident applicants, however, if they are needed to fill demands in regular drawings.

The Water Nesters

Every animal and bird inherits certain habits, instincts, abilities, and physical aptitudes which limits their lives to a certain type of habitat.

For birds, habitat requirements are probably most crucial during nesting periods. The availability of food, suitable nesting sites and nest building materials, singing perches or roosts, and escape cover are all important. For many birds these needs are met in the reeds, sedges, and cattails of shallow waters. Many others find conditions to their liking at the water's edge.

Coming home, a great blue heron approaches her nest. Herons eat a variety of small animal life including snakes, insects, mice, frogs, an occasional bird, and small fish.

Left—Young of great blue heron live in very odious and untidy households. Herons nest in colonies and prefer an isolated island. The nest, a platform of sticks, is usually at the top of a tall tree.

Eared grebes nest, generally in colonies, over marsh areas. Nests are simply soggy masses of vegetation elevated slightly above the water level and eggs are continually wet. Note the flat, paddle-like toes on the young grebe.

At left is a young Franklin's Gull and egg. Franklin's Gull's nest in bullrushes or reed-like plants over shallow water. They are important insect eaters.

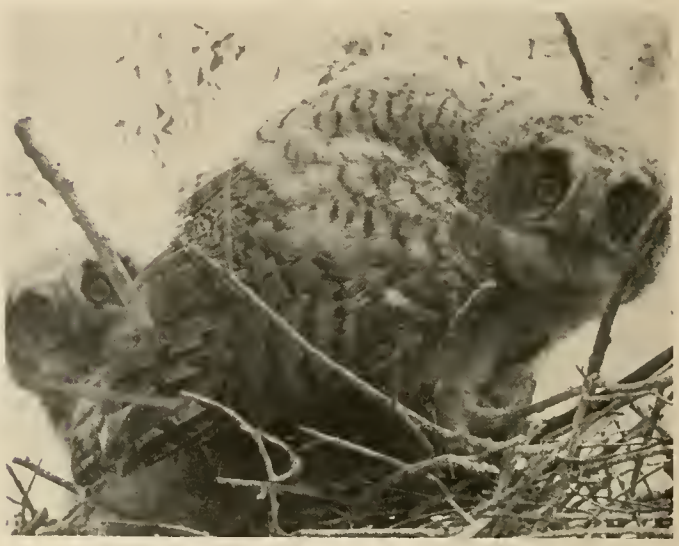
Bald eagles seldom nest far from water. Nests, or aeries, are made of large sticks and lined with softer vegetation. Young eagles do not get the white head and tail until early in their fourth year.

The bald eagle was chosen as our national emblem in 1782. The wild turkey was a close runner-up.

Bald eagles are very fond of fish, and though they are poor fishermen they are adept at taking fish away from ospreys.

These downy young great-horned owls will grow to be veritable terrors of the night. In their silent flights they hunt down all forms of animal life from domestic cats to insects. This is truly nature's better mouse trap.

Customarily great horned owls do not build their own nests, but take over those built by other large birds.



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